

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

# CAHABA RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE ESTABLISHMENT ACT

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4286) to provide for the establishment of the Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge in Bibb County, Alabama, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4286

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

## SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

*This Act may be cited as the "Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge Establishment Act".*

## SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

*The Congress finds the following:*

(1) The Cahaba River in Alabama is recognized nationally for its unique biological diversity which includes providing habitat for 131 species of fish (more than any other river its size in North America).

(2) The Cahaba River is home to 64 rare and imperiled species of aquatic plants and animals, including fishes, freshwater turtles, mussels, and snails.

(3) The Cahaba River is home to 12 species of fish, mussels, and snails listed as endangered or threatened species.

(4) The Cahaba River is home to 6 terrestrial species of plants and animals listed as endangered or threatened species.

(5) The Cahaba River harbors the largest population in the world of the imperiled shoals lily, known locally as the Cahaba Lily.

(6) The Cahaba River watershed contains extremely rare plant communities that are home to 8 species of plants previously unknown to science and a total of 69 rare and imperiled species of plants.

(7) The Cahaba River is home to at least a dozen endemic aquatic animals that are found nowhere else in the world.

(8) The Cahaba River is the longest remaining free-flowing river in Alabama, flowing through 5 counties in central Alabama.

(9) The Cahaba River is recognized as an Outstanding Alabama Water by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management.

(10) The Cahaba River has high recreational value for hunters, anglers, birdwatchers, canoeists, nature photographers, and others.

(11) The Cahaba River Watershed supports large populations of certain game species, including deer, turkey, and various species of ducks.

(12) The Cahaba River area is deserving of inclusion in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

## SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

*In this Act:*

(1) **REFUGE.**—The term "Refuge" means the Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge established by section 4(a).

(2) **SECRETARY.**—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

## SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF REFUGE.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—There is established in Bibb County, Alabama, the Cahaba National Wildlife Refuge, consisting of approximately 3,500 acres of Federal lands and waters, and interests in lands and waters, within the boundaries depicted upon the map entitled "Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge—Proposed", dated April 10, 2000.

(2) **BOUNDARY REVISIONS.**—The Secretary may make such minor revisions of the boundaries of the Refuge as may be appropriate to carry out

the purposes of the Refuge or to facilitate the acquisition of property within the Refuge.

(3) **AVAILABILITY OF MAP.**—The Secretary shall keep the map referred to in paragraph (1) available for inspection in appropriate offices of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

(b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The establishment of the Refuge under paragraph (1) of subsection (a) shall take effect on the date the Secretary publishes, in the Federal Register and publications of local circulation in the vicinity of the area within the boundaries referred to in that paragraph, a notice that sufficient property has been acquired by the United States within those boundaries to constitute an area that can be efficiently managed as a National Wildlife Refuge.

## SEC. 5. ACQUISITION OF LANDS AND WATERS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary, subject to the availability of appropriations, may acquire up to 3,500 acres of lands and waters, or interests therein, within the boundaries of the Refuge described in section 4(a)(1).

(b) **INCLUSION IN REFUGE.**—Any lands, waters, or interests acquired by the Secretary under this section shall be part of the Refuge.

## SEC. 6. ADMINISTRATION.

*In administering the Refuge, the Secretary shall—*

(1) conserve, enhance, and restore the native aquatic and terrestrial community characteristics of the Cahaba River (including associated fish, wildlife, and plant species);

(2) conserve, enhance, and restore habitat to maintain and assist in the recovery of animals and plants that are listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.);

(3) in providing opportunities for compatible fish- and wildlife-oriented recreation, ensure that hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation are the priority general public uses of the Refuge, in accordance with section 4(a)(3) and (4) of the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668ee(a)(3), (4)); and

(4) encourage the use of volunteers and to facilitate partnerships among the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, local communities, conservation organizations, and other non-Federal entities to promote public awareness of the resources of the Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge and the National Wildlife Refuge System and public participation in the conservation of those resources.

## SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

*There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary—*

(1) such funds as may be necessary for the acquisition of lands and waters within the boundaries of the Refuge; and

(2) such funds as may be necessary for the development, operation, and maintenance of the Refuge.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) and the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4286, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oregon?

There was no objection.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 4286, introduced by our colleagues, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS) and the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. RILEY) would establish the 3,500 acre Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge in Bibb County, Alabama.

The Cahaba is the longest free-flowing river in Alabama and it may have the greatest concentration of fish biodiversity per mile of any river in the United States. It has been called "Alabama's rain forest" because it contains essential habitat for 69 rare and imperiled species and 131 species of fish. There are 13 species found nowhere else in the world but in the Cahaba River.

During the hearing on this bill, the subcommittee learned that only those landowners who are interested in selling their property were included within the proposed boundaries of the refuge. Furthermore, one of our witnesses, Ms. Wendy Allen of the Alabama Nature Conservancy testified that "This refuge represents an outstanding opportunity to protect some of the rarest species in the world via a remarkable public/private partnership."

The goals of this refuge would be to conserve native aquatic species, assist in the recovery of listed plants and animals, provide opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation, and encourage partnerships and volunteers to assist in the operation of this refuge.

The Cahaba River is a unique, beautiful and pristine area that is worthy of refuge designation. I urge an "aye" vote on this important conservation measure, and I compliment the authors of this legislation for their outstanding leadership.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to take the time for the minority to speak in support of this legislation. This legislation is an important effort to establish a new National Wildlife Refuge in central Alabama along a 3½ mile reach of the Cahaba River.

The Cahaba River is a remarkable river in its biological diversity and concentration of rare endangered species. As examples, the Cahaba River Watershed provides habitat for 69 rare and imperiled aquatic species and 32 animal and plant species that are protected under the Endangered Species Act, including 13 endemic species that are found nowhere else in the world. This section of the Cahaba River should be added to the national wildlife refuge system to ensure its long-term protection.

H.R. 4286 was improved and clarified during its consideration by the Committee on Resources. I had the opportunity to sit in on the presentation of this bill by its sponsors. I am told the administration fully supports the enactment of H.R. 4286, and I urge my colleagues to vote "aye."

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. RILEY).

Mr. RILEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4286, a bill that would establish the Cahaba River national wildlife refuge. I also wish to acknowledge efforts by the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS), my good friend and colleague who has worked very hard to make this bill a reality.

The Cahaba River bill provides a rare opportunity for Congress to do something that is finally supported by environmentalists, industry groups, and all of our local municipalities. The Cahaba River runs through five counties in central Alabama, but as it meanders its way south of metropolitan Birmingham, water quality and habitat are adversely affected due to water degradation, siltation, and habitat destruction. Fortunately for all of us, this damage is not irreparable.

Right now, the Piper Bridge area of the third district of Alabama's Bibb County is used largely for silvaculture. In purchasing the land, the Federal Government would agree to maintain the area for public use and would ensure access.

The Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge will conserve, enhance, and restore one of the most distinct and threatened rivers in the world. In its main stem, the Cahaba River is one of the most diverse rivers in North America, containing over 130 species. Of these species, 13 are found only in this river, and another 22 are believed to be seriously imperiled in this and other ecosystems.

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These 3,500 acres are currently owned by four different landowners. All four have agreed to sell or convey the land, and all four have expressed their support for the national wildlife refuge. The approximate cost of \$7 million, which will come out of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, is a relatively small sum for what we stand to gain.

Furthermore, it can be expected that this magnificent area will generate ecotourism revenue, which still remains a priority for many of us that represent rural districts.

Madam Speaker, I suggest that the return on investment for the wildlife refuge makes this one of the best deals before Congress this session. I would also like to invite all of my colleagues on either side of the aisle to view this river for themselves. There are few sites as moving, as stunningly beautiful, as the Cahaba River when it is covered by the Cahaba Lily in full bloom. It looks to be like a sheet of pure white over the river, while a multitude of creatures flourish beneath.

In closing, Madam Speaker, we must protect this most beautiful of rivers while we still have the opportunity, so I ask for the support of all my colleagues in the House in helping to pre-

serve what I truly believe is a national treasure.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS).

Mr. BACHUS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Madam Speaker, the Cahaba River has 131 species of fish, fresh water fish. That may not mean a lot, we have heard that figure twice today, but let me put that in comparison. That is more species of fresh water fish than the entire State of California. It has more mussels, more species of mussels, than Europe. It has, as the gentleman has already said, more endangered species among those 131 of any river in the United States.

But it goes beyond that. It has eight plants which had never been discovered. They were discovered on an expedition in 1992. It has more species of crayfish than any other river in the United States. So we are talking about a national treasure. We are talking about a national treasure that will not be here for our grandchildren unless we pass this bill.

The reason for that is that this river has been preserved along its lower course in its natural state until the past 5 or 10 years, as metropolitan Birmingham began to encroach on its watershed, and there was a tremendous amount of development in the upper watershed. In fact, today during the dry season as much as 99 percent of the water flow is diverted from the Cahaba River. That has had a tremendous negative impact on the lower stretches of the river.

Also, as this river becomes more and more known for its beauty, it has the largest stand of what is called aquatic lilies in the world. That has been advertised in the past 4 or 5 years. People have come down by the hundreds to view these lilies. Unfortunately, when they have come, they have actually gotten into the river and used crowbars and ripped some of these bulbs from the river, because this stand of lilies is in an area of the river that is owned by private landowners.

This has disturbed the people of Bibb County, who have enjoyed this beautiful river for years. The Bibb County Commission, the cities along the lower stretches of the river, and the landowners themselves all uniformly agreed that something needed to be done.

The Nature Conservancy, this is the national Nature Conservancy, they published a book in 1998, and in that they said, and I think this is something that all of us in Congress probably do not realize, and I know I did not, it said, "Few of us realize that the diversity of life in fresh water systems in the United States is exceptional, even when compared to the tropics. However, two centuries of dam construction, water withdrawals, land use alterations, pollution, and introduction of non-native species have led to the ac-

celeration and in many cases irreparable losses of fresh water species."

They then went on to identify some watersheds that contain these endangered species. Unfortunately, this publication points out that Alabama leads the Nation in the number of species which are now extinct. Eight percent of the fresh water in the United States flows through Alabama. We have more passable rivers, more navigable rivers in miles, over 1,400, than any other State, but we have the dubious distinction of having the most extinct species.

We also have 69 that are endangered. Fortunately, almost all of those reside within this 15-mile stretch, so this piece of legislation is the first step in preserving this river and these species not only of fish but also of mussels and crayfish and other animals in the river from extinction. I would urge a "yes" vote.

Madam Speaker, in addition to my remarks, I would also like to express my sincere thanks to several people who have made this legislation a success.

Wendy Allen and the Members of The Nature Conservancy of Alabama.

Beth Stewart and the Members of the Cahaba River Society.

U.S. Alliance—Coosa Pines and the other private landowners who have been extremely supportive and patient throughout this entire process.

The Bibb County Commission and local Cahaba River Authority.

Commissioner Riley B. Smith of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, as well as, Majority Leader ARMEY for scheduling the bill on the Suspension Calendar today and Chairman DON YOUNG and Subcommittee Chair Mr. SAXTON for their support of this bill.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I think the Members obviously have made a compelling case, the case that we heard in committee for the protection of the Cahaba River. I would hope that all Members would support this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4286, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM CENTENNIAL ACT

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and